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INFO RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL PRIORITY
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RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY 0115
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 000213

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DEPT FOR DB/IFD/OFD WAECHTER AND NEA/ELA ALLEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/12/2017
TAGS: PREL ECON EFIN EAID LE JA
SUBJECT: JAPANESE SUPPORT FOR LEBANON AT PARIS III
CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 2781

Classified By: Ambassador J.Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Japan is unlikely to participate in the Paris III International Conference for Support to Lebanon at the ministerial level, nor is it contemplating any significant additional pledges of support, according to MOFA First Middle East Division Lebanon officer Hitoshi Ishizuka and Lebanese Charge d'Affaires Toufic Jaber.

¶2. (C) Embassy Tokyo Political Officer discussed the upcoming Paris III conference with Ishizuka on January 9 and 11 and provided talking points drawn from reftel, stressing the great importance we attach to the success of this conference and the critical need to show international support for the survival of democracy in Lebanon. Ishizuka replied that it would be difficult for Japan to dispatch a ministerial level delegation to Paris due to the fact the Diet will be in session and all ministers will be required to remain in Tokyo to participate. With regard to pledges of financial assistance, Ishizuka repeated the message we've heard before: Lebanon is too wealthy to qualify for Official Development Assistance.

¶3. (C) Political Officer also discussed this issue with Lebanese Charge d'Affaires in Tokyo, Dr. Toufic Jaber, who reported that he, too, is pessimistic that Japan will show much support for Lebanon. He reported he had spoken January 10 to MOFA First Middle East Division Director Hideo Sato, who gave him the same message as the one we received from Ishizuka. Sato told Jaber MOFA is considering sending Special Envoy for the Middle East Peace Process Tatsuo Arima to represent Japan, and intimated that if Japan does make any additional support available, it is likely to be limited to small amounts contributed through other organizations such as the UNDP, UNICEF, and/or UNESCO, as has been the case in the past. (NOTE: To date, Japan has pledged \$3 million in assistance, the disbursement of which was approved by the government on November 10, 2006. The focus of this aid has been to combat environmental damage done by the fighting as well as to restore disrupted water and sanitation services.

END NOTE.) Jaber said that his government is very dissatisfied with Japan's response to Lebanon's need for support and that Prime Minister Siniora has called in the Japanese Ambassador in Beirut to complain. The Prime Minister also wishes to telephone Japanese Minister of Finance Omi to appeal directly for assistance, but Jaber had no further details about whether or when such a call took place. Jaber also said that Sato told him Japan would probably not make a final decision on participation at Paris III until late the week of January 15, following the visit to Tokyo of Israeli Foreign Minister Livni.

¶4. (C) Lebanese Charge Jaber subsequently contacted us on January 17 to report that Sato had just told him that French President Chirac had personally appealed to Prime Minister Abe when the two met in Paris the previous week for Abe himself to attend the Paris III conference and for Japan to make a significant contribution. When Abe explained that scheduling conflicts preclude his attendance, Chirac pressed for ministerial-level Japanese participation. Sato told Jaber that he would be meeting with the Prime Minister's office later in the week to determine Japan's response to President Chirac's strong personal demarche.

SCHIEFFER